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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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SUBJECT: "Tomatin--A New Antibiotic"--Information from scientists of the Agricultural Research Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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If you garden...you know you can plant certain varieties of vegetables that have been bred to resist disease. One well-known kind is the tomato bred to resist wilt---that's the disease caused by fungus carried in certain soils.

But have you ever wondered what it is that makes the plant able to resist the disease?

Well...scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture are making a study of that question.

And one of their findings may have results as far-reaching as the discovery of penicillin.

Because the scientists have found that the disease-resistant tomato plant manufactures an antibiotic agent similar in action to penicillin.

The scientists call this new antibiotic agent...tomatin (tom' ah tin). It occurs in the most concentrated form in the juice in the tomato plant leaves.

Tomatin has the power to destroy soil fungus that causes wilt in tomato plants.

More than that....the scientists find--in laboratory experiments that tomatin will also destroy fungi that cause disease in man such as athlete's foot...ring worm...and eczema.

Up to now...the scientists have not made tomatin of sufficient purity to try out its healing power on human beings. But they are continuing the investigations.

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